

KANDORI! Yamada! CHIGUSA! KOBASHI! Kroffat! AKIYAMA! Williams! BENNETT! and other stuff I saw and heard this week!

Howdy!

Welcome to Death Valley Driver Video Review #11!!!

I'm a ONE MAN BANDWIDTH SLAUGHTERHOUSE this weekend, what with batches of tapes from benevolent Scott, Dams the Man, and Paul the Stud with it All (sorry!) to yammer on about, add that to Halloween Havoc tomorrow, and cretin NAWA wrestling in Midlothian tonight, all I can say is "Dean Rasmussen- get used to the name! He's wearing out his cyber-welcome." Let's go to the ring.

- I watched two All Japan handhelds from 94 that Scott sent me and these were more fun than I thought AJ could be. These were the first two complete cards I've ever seen of AJ and it was actually real goofy in spots, which I wasn't expecting and, of course it had a lot of great matches on them. The highlight of the first card, from April 11, 1994, for me, was Steve Williams vs Jun Akiyama, which degenerated into a clinic of suplex brutality, with Williams getting more neckbreaking high angle suplexes in and I'm really glad I'm not Jun Akiyama, though he more than held his own against my country's greatest wrestling machine. When the f*ck does Williams face Takada? I would have interest in seeing that. Johnny Ace and The Eagle vs John Nord and Dan Kroffat was surprisely good because Nord actually worked as hard as the other guys and took more heckish bumps. I had no idea that he had any inkling of wrestling ability. Johnny Ace ruled as he always does. Ditto Kroffat. I had the Kobashi/Hansen match on some compilation I got so I didn't rewatch it yet, though I do remember it being stiff and full of psychology. The second handheld from November 19, 1994, was highlighted by the AMAZINGLY fun Misawa/Kobashi vs Furnas/Kroffat match, which bodes well for the WWF if these guys can be 1/100th as effective against such august tagteam concepts as the Godwinns (yikes!). The basic premise is that Kobashi gets his ass beaten into the ground while Danny and Doug cheat like all good North Americans do and the crowd REALLY gets into it. I love it when they boo the save made by Misawa after Can-Am has done every textbook American pro style ref distraction and underhanded move in the book. (Dan Kroffat does this hip swivel thing on the first hh that I had seen him do in a match against Silver King and El Texacano in Mexico, when Can-AM were wearing masks, and I always wondered which one did it. It's Kroffat and I fell out. If you haven't seen it, you'll cry. The ladies will love it.) Misawa really mailed this one in, so I'm guessing he was injured or something, or maybe he didn't want to get in the way of the INSANE amount of nearfalls that permeate the last five minutes of the match, after our man Kenta has been bludgeoned beyond recognition. A truly great match. The rest of the card was truly in the realm of "God! He made the Japanese Tour? I didn't even know he still wrestled!" category. Usually it's Tom Zenk or that Tommy Dreamer/Taue match type of thing, this time around, it was Kimala and JIM STEELE!?!? The great thing is that the teaming of Kimala and Abdullah the Butcher shows that, in the end, they really are just fourth rate Headhunters.:) Decent match between Kawada/Fuchi/Taue vs Kiyama/ Omori/Asako with a fabulous three-man All Japan beatdown on Kawada. When Akiyama and Kawada are in together its magic, except Kawada kept doing that REALLY goofy log-rolling on the chest of Akiyama move. Overall, a great way to kill an afternoon. Props to Mighty Inoue for the little Sentons.

- At the end of the AJ hh tape was the added extra (Scott rules!)- a video wall hh of some of the 11/94 Big Egg Wrestling Universe show from the Tokyo Dome and there were truly fabulous happenings on it. The first thing was Debbie Malenko against someone in an amateur match which was kinda neat. I'm guessing this was after she broke her leg. She can go to it. The second match was a GREAT Reggie Bennett vs Chigusa Nagayo match that had the great pseudoshoot (or maybe real) Chigusa rib injury. Bennett worked well with Chigusa and I wonder if they will be reprising this in WCW when the GAEA/WCW deal kicks in in January. I would be deeply into it, if they do. The third match was VERY VERY GREAT with Shinobu Kandori and Futagami vs Yamada and Tomoko Watanabe. Futagami and Watanabe (who works her hinder off in this match) are running interference for the real hellstorm of Yamada vs Kandori. These young ladies beat the living hell out of each other. Yamada misses the top rope spin kick like she did against Hotta. Kandori is just a f*cking badass, working as stiff as she wants to. Somebody needs to make a "Awesome Babes of Shootstyle" tape with Kandori, Hotta, Yamada, Asuka and our gal, Aja. It was CHOICE! Then there are bunch of introductions and neat shots of the Domes structure and the beginning of the Michinoku Pro match that is cut off after about five minutes. Luckily, I believe St. Phil is sending the commercial version of that match next week. Delfin has the coolest entrance music now and Naniwa's rocked as usual. I love the crab-claw oversized ovenmitts.

- I watched WrestleWar 89 with THE MATCH on it and, HELL! it was great! Thanks Paul! Except for the match afterwards! Road Warriors- ugh. I won't go on about how great the Flair/Steamboat match was because its been analyzed to death, but I will say one thing- the match was REALLY PERFECT, especially the second time around, but Flair/Funk was better. I said it, so there. The Muta/Doug Gilbert match reminded me of when I saw Muta in Charlottesville at U Hall with a bunch farmers and he was really okay!

- The October Edition of Wrestling Power 96 delivered the goods as usual (sometimes living in Richmond has its advantages!), The featured matches were ECW handhelds from Reading (or as we say down hear Reeding), PA. The Sabu vs Damian 666 match was pretty good, though I should like Damian more than I do, because he is the biggest overacheiver in wrestling right now, in that he can make a match interesting though he doesn't have a lot of natural athletic ability. I like the fact that they both went at it full bore at a house show, though this wasn't Sabu vs Scorpio or anything. The second match was really good- Robbie Van Dam vs Shane Douglas. This went in and out of the ring with the goofy martial arts stuff kept to a minimum. I'm still confused about Douglas. Is he getting better or does he just have better guys carrying him? Either way, this was a really good match with lots of trademark furniture usage which is always an added extra when coupled with a real wrestling match, which it was. Hell with it! Van Dam is gonna be a truly fine wrestler for a long time and I'm totally sold on him now. The Wrestling Spotlight was on Steve Corino (I think I spelled it right) (the 4-5-6 kid) and GEEZ! y'all weren't kidding! He is Waltman's doppelganger. The show ended with a big tribute to Magnum TA and I wonder if we would have been subjected to Lex Luger if Magnum would have kept the car on the road. It seems he was on the brink of attaining the position that Luger held right after Terry

Allen was forced out of the sport. Overall, another fabulous show (and I'll forgive them for busting on Juventud falling over the steps.

- The Juventud match this morning was good. I'm guessing this wasn't too old because of the SlimJim ring. I give his springboard DDT a 5/8ths Ohtani. I read a Bischoff interview on their homepage where he hinted at a Cruiserweight tag title so this Juventud/Misterio tag teaming suddenly makes sense. I guess they are gonna use Rey to get as many belts over as possible. It will all be worth it if we get a Rey/Juventud vs Liger/Ultimo match out of it. My question is- how does the ProAzteca stuff affect the WCW/AAA deal? Is it back to tapes to see Psicosis, Juventud and the boys (which would suck)? Did Bischoff negotiate with Konnan or with Pena? Is AAA dead in the water? Whither Ultimo Dragon? Mexico is such a foreign country some times.

IN A FEW DAYS: All Japan Carnival 95! First leg of Luchathon III! Dream Slam I and II! Incessant rambling!

NANIWA~!

- Dean Rasmussen, Juventudiac!